

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 7399/1

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SUBJ: JAPAN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS AND FOREIGN POLICY IN NORTHEAST
ASIA

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK FOR ASST SECRETARY HABIB

SUMMARY: THE FALL OF SAIGON, COMBINED WITH KIM IL-SUNG'S VISIT
TO PEKING, SPARKED WIDESPREAD DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE PARALLELS
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AFFECTING THE FUTURE OF KOREA, BUT HAS NOT CHANGED THE JAPANESE
ESTABLISHMENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS IN
NORTHEAST ASIA. TO MAINTAIN JAPAN'S MILITARY SECURITY AND
THE STABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT NEEDED TO SUSTAIN CURRENT

LEVELS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT, JAPAN WILL CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE UNITED STATES AND MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY, WORK FOR BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW AND PEKING, AND DO WHAT IT CAN TO PRESERVE THE STATUS QUO ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THE JAPANESE SEE THEIR STRATEGIC LEVERAGE IN THE AREA AS LIMITED. DOMESTIC POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES INHIBIT DISCUSSION OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH JAPAN MIGHT AUTHORIZE THE USE OF AMERICAN BASES TO SUPPORT THE US COMMITMENT TO THE ROK. TACTICALLY, THE JAPANESE ARE LIKELY TO TAKE MEASURES TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE ROK, SUPPORT ITS POSITION IN THE UN, AND HELP STRENGTHEN ITS ECONOMY. THE JAPANESE WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ASSURE US LEADERS OF THE VALUE IT PLACES BOTH ON THE MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY AND ON THE CONTINUED US ROLE IN GUARANTEEING THE SECURITY OF THE ROK. THE JAPANESE ATTITUDE MAY SERVE AMERICAN INTERESTS BY ENCOURAGING A STRONGER US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP AND CLOSER TRILATERAL LINKS WITH THE ROK. END SUMMARY.

1. INTRODUCTION - IF THE JAPANESE HAD BEEN ANTICIPATING THE FALL OF SAIGON (REFTEL), THEY WERE NOT PREPARED FOR KIM IL-SUNG'S APPARENT EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE ON THE TREND OF EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HIS MID-APRIL VISIT TO PEKING, READ BY MOST JAPANESE AS A BID FOR CHINESE SUPPORT FOR MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THE ROK, SENT TREMORS THROUGHOUT THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT IN TOKYO. APPREHENSION OVER AMERICAN RELIABILITY AS AN ALLY, FEAR OF KIM IL-SUNG'S INTENTIONS AFTER SAIGON ACTUALLY SURRENDERED, AND WORRY THAT PRESIDENT PARK'S EMERGENCY DECREES MIGHT ERODE FURTHER ROK UNITY AND STRENGTH ALL MADE THE POSSIBILITY OF A SHIFT IN THE KOREAN POWER BALANCE SEEM REAL FOR A WHILE, AND FORCED THE ESTABLISHMENT TO LOOK CLOSELY AT JAPANESE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, POLITICAL POSTURE, AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

2. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS HAVE COMBINED TO CALM JAPANESE APPREHENSIONS. PEKING OBVIOUSLY HAD NO ENTHUSIASM FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE TO REUNIFY KOREA, AND THE TONE OF KIM IL-SUNG'S STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT (MOST RECENTLY IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ROMANIA ON MAY 24) HAVE MODERATED ACCORDINGLY. STRONG REAFFIRMATIONS OF THE AMERICAN SECURITY COMMITMENT TO THE ROK BY PRESIDENT FORD, SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND EVIDENCE OF RESURGENT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS POSITION WERE FOLLOWED BY PROOF DURING THE MAYAGUEZ RESCUE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS WILLING AND ABLE TO USE FORCE IN DEFENSE OF ITS PRINCIPLES WHEN PROVOKED. PRESIDENT PARK HAS RECEIVED OPPOSITION LEADER KIM YONG-SAM AMID STRONG AFFIRMATIONS IN THE KOREAN PRESS OF ROK UNITY AGAINST THE THREAT FROM THE NORTH.

3. NEVERTHELESS A RESIDUE OF ANXIETY REMAINS, HARDENED BY A SENSE THAT JAPAN'S LEVERAGE IS LIMITED AND OPTIONS ARE

FEW. THE PERIOD OF REASSESSMENT IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE, ALTHOUGH THE POLICY CONSENSUS, COMPLICATED BY THE INTENSELY EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES IN JAPAN TOWARD BOTH KOREAS AND THE TANGLED MIX OF DOMESTIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP, HAS BEEN SLOW TO EMERGE. WHAT FOLLOWS IS OUR ASSESSMENT OF THAT CONSENSUS, AS SHARED BY THOSE WHO MAKE AND INFLUENCE JAPANESE POLICY TOWARD THE AREA.

4. JAPANESE INTERESTS - THE FALL OF THE GVN HAS NOT CHANGED JAPANESE PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR INTERESTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA AND HOW THESE CAN BEST BE MAINTAINED. JAPAN'S MILITARY SECURITY AND THE STABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT NEEDED TO MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVELS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT THROUGHOUT EAST ASIA REQUIRE THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S., CHINA AND THE USSR IN THE AREA REMAIN IN BALANCE. TO CONTRIBUTE TO PRESERVING THE NECESSARY BALANCE, GOJ FOREIGN POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE UNDER THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

A. JAPAN WILL RELY ON THE UNITED STATES AND THE MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY FOR ITS DEFENSE. THE GOJ IS CONFIDENT THAT THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO REGARD JAPAN'S SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES AS VITAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF STABLE CONDITIONS IN NORTHEAST ASIA AND THE AMERICA'S OWN SECURITY. JAPAN'S LEADERS DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL MEET ITS SECURITY OBLIGATION TO JAPAN AND FOR THAT PURPOSE WILL STAND BY ITS COMMITMENTS TO THE ROK.

B. JAPAN WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE PRC AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE JAPANESE HAVE MADE MORE PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH THE
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CHINESE THAN WITH THE SOVIETS IN RECENT MONTHS. THE ONCE FASHIONABLE CONCEPT OF MAINTAINING "EQUIDISTANCE" IN TOKYO'S TIES WITH BOTH PEKING AND MOSCOW HAS FADED INTO DISUSE. NEVERTHELESS, JAPANESE RELUCTANCE SO FAR DURING TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WITH PEKING TO INCLUDE A CLAUSE IN THE BODY OF THE TREATY WHICH DECRIES POWERS WHO SEEK "HEGEMONY" DEMONSTRATES GOJ DISINCLINATION TO OFFEND THE USSR. CONCERN ALSO EXISTS THAT PEKING MIGHT SOMEDAY ATTEMPT TO DIRECT AN "ANTI-HEGEMONY" CLAUSE AGAINST JAPAN-US RELATIONS. "BALANCE" IS NOW THE WATCHWORD AMONG FOREIGN OFFICE PLANNERS WHO TAKE PAINS TO POINT OUT THAT RECENT JAPANESE AGREEMENTS SIGNED WITH THE PRC ONLY REPRESENT AN EFFORT TO BRING SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS UP TO THE SAME LEVEL AS THE OLDER LINK WITH MOSCOW. HOWEVER, SHOULD MOSCOW'S INFLUENCE IN ASIA GROW SIGNIFICANTLY AS A RESULT OF HANOI VICTORY, WE BELIEVE THAT THE JAPANESE WILL TILT THE "BALANCE" IN PEKING'S FAVOR.

C. JAPAN'S LEADERS CONTINUE TO REGARD THE SECURITY OF THE ROK AS ESSENTIAL TO ITS OWN. FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA'S REAFFIRMATION IN APRIL ON THE "ROK CLAUSE" IN THE NIXON-SATO COMMUNIQUE OF NOVEMBER 1969 RANKS AS ONE OF THE MIKI CABINET'S MOST UNEQUIVOCAL FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS TO DATE. VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMUNITY

ARRIVE AT THIS CONCLUSION FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES, HOWEVER.
THE OLDER GENERATION STILL STICK WITH THE DICTUM THAT KOREA
IS A "DAGGER POINTED AT THE HEART OF JAPAN" AND THAT A
PENINSULA UNITED UNDER A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT WOULD REPRESENT
A MORTAL THREAT. THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF SERIOUS ANALYSIS
OF THE PROPOSITION OR ARTICULATION FOR WHAT SEEMS AKIN TO AN
ARTICLE OF FAITH. YOUNGER POLICY PLANNERS SEE THE DIVISION
OF KOREA AS HAVING THE EFFECT OF BALANCING THE INTERESTS
OF JAPAN AND THE GREAT POWERS IN NORTHEAST ASIA. SHOULD THE
PENINSULA BE UNITED BY FORCE UNDER ANY AUSPICES, THE BALANCE
WOULD BE ALTERED AND DANGEROUS INSTABILITY ENSUE.

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5. OTHER OFFICIAL SBELIEVE THAT A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN
KOREA COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF THE UNITED STATES FAILED
TO FULFILL ITS SECURITY COMMITMENT TO THE ROK, AND SHUDDER
TO THINK WHAT SUCH A FAILURE MIGHT MEAN FOR US-JAPAN SECURITY
RELATIONS. YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMUNITY,
INCLUDING SOME PRESS COMMENTATORS, FAIL TO SEE WHAT DIFFERENCE
A UNITED COMMUNIST KOREA, ESPECIALLY IF ACCOMPLISHED BY
PEACEFUL MEANS, WOULD MAKE TO A JAPAN WHICH HAS PROSPERED

WITH THE TWO LEADING COMMUNIST POWERS, THE PRC AND USSR, LIVING AS NEAR NEIGHBORS FOR DECADES. THE LATTER ARE STILL IN THE MINORITY, BUT IT IS A STRONG MINORITY WHICH COULD GAIN INFLUENCE IF TRADITIONAL VIEWS HELD BY THE OLDER
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GENERATION OF THE NEED FOR A BUFFER ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA FADE WITH TIME.

6. THE JAPANESE ACCEPT RECENT PROMISES TO MAINTAIN AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN KOREA AS EVIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL HONOR ITS SECURITY COMMITMENT TO THE ROK. THEY APPRECIATE THE WORDING OF AMERICAN REAFFIRMATIONS WHICH TREAT THE US COMMITMENT TO KOREA AS IMPORTANT TO JAPANESE SECURITY. SOME PLANNERS ARE WORRIED, HOWEVER, ABOUT FUTURE CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE IN THE UNITED STATES AGAINST STATIONING TROOPS IN KOREA. IF AND WHEN THE US DECIDES TO REMOVE TROOPS, THESE OFFICIALS HOPE THAT THE DECISION WILL BE ANNOUNCED WELL IN ADVANCE AND EXECUTED IN AN ORDERLY PHASED WAY THAT WILL AVOID UPSETTING THE MILITARY BALANCE AND/OR HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL REPERCUSSIONS, BOTH IN JAPAN AND THE ROK.

7. ECONOMICALLY, JAPAN HAS SOME IMPORTANT INTERESTS -- PARTICULARLY INVESTMENTS -- IN ROK BUT IS ALSO AWARE THAT JAPAN IS FAR MORE VITAL TO THE ROK THAN IS THE ROK TO JAPAN. FOR EXAMPLE, JAPAN'S INVESTMENTS IN ROK ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 4 PER CENT OF JAPAN'S TOTAL OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS BUT MORE THAN 60 PERCENT OF TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN ROK. TRADE WITH JAPAN IS ALSO MORE VITAL TO ROK THAN VICE VERSA, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMMODITY COMPOSITION CONSIDERED. THESE FACTORS TEMPER JAPANESE ENTHUSIASM FOR MORE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO ASSIST ROK ECONOMY UNLESS THE ROK IS WILLING TO MAKE SOME GESTURE TOWARD ACCOMMODATING JAPANESE IN OTHER, E.G., POLITICAL, FIELDS.

8. STRATEGIC LEVERAGE - IF THE ESTABLISHMENT'S PERCEPTION OF JAPAN'S INTEREST IN STATUS QUO IN NORTHEAST ASIA IS REASONABLY CLEAR, THE JAPANESE SEE THEIR STRATEGIC LEVERAGE TO RATHER THESE INTERESTS AS VERY LIMITED. LACKING MILITARY POWER TO PROJECT INTO THE AREA, JAPANESE LEVERAGE DERIVES SOLELY FROM THE INFLUENCE THE GOJ CAN EXERT OVER THE WAY US BASES IN JAPAN COULD BE USED TO SUPPORT THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE ROK. DUE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES, THE ISSUE, THOUGH RAISED IN PUBLIC, HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN ANY DEPTH, EITHER BY THE PRESS OR IN PRIVATE WITH US OFFICIALS HERE DURING THE CURRENT VIEW. OUR ASSESSMENT IS
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THAT THE GOJ WOULD ACQUIESCE FULLY IN THE USE OF AMERICAN

BASES IN JAPAN IF THE NORTH KOREANS ATTACKED ACROSS THE DMZ IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE ARMISTICE. IF THE ISSUE WERE LESS CLEAR AND DPRK MILITARY ACTIVITY WERE LIMITED TO SUPPORTING AN INSURGENCY IN THE SOUTH, JAPANESE SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF AMERICAN BASES TO SUPPORT THE PARK GOVERNMENT WOULD FACE DOMESTIC CRITICISM, TO WHICH THE GOJ WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE. IF ACTION BY PRESIDENT PARK WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRIGGERING HOSTILITIES, THE GOJ WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COOPERATE AT ALL. REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, A PROLONGED STRUGGLE IN KOREA WOULD BE VERY DIVISIVE IN JAPAN AND WOULD TEND TO ERODE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE CONCRETE SUPPORT FOR US ACTIONS. THE EXISTENCE OF 640,000 KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN SPLIT ROUGHLY 50/50 IN SUPPORT OF TWO KOREAS, OLD HISTORICAL AND RACIAL ANTIPATHIES, AND MORE RECENT POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES, ALL COMBINE TO INHIBIT GOJ ACTIONS ON ANY KOREAN ISSUE.

9. TACTICAL MOVES - THE JAPANESE WILL LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE SHORT-TERM TACTICAL AND PERHAPS SOME LIMITED ECONOMIC MOVES THEY DEEM POSSIBLE TO BUILD ROK CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT ROK'S INTERESTS IN THE AREA. THE ROK HAS BEEN PRESSING THE GOJ TO SCHEDULE THE LONG-DELAYED JOINT MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AS A SHOW OF UNITY AND A SIGNAL TO KIM IL-SUNG. THE GOJ APPROVES OF THE IDEA AND IS LIKELY TO AGREE IF THE ROK CAN MAKE SOME SMALL GESTURE ON THE KIM DAE-JUNG CASE THAT WILL SOOTHE SOMEWHAT THE SORE FEELINGS ON THE ISSUE THAT STILL EXIST IN JAPAN. LAST APRIL BEFORE THE FALL OF SAIGON, JAPAN RESUMED ECONOMIC AID TO THE ROK, SIGNING AN AGREEMENT PROVIDING CLOSE TO \$100 MILLION WORTH OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE. MORE CAN BE EXPECTED, THOUGH MEASURED IN BOTH PACE AND AMOUNT. THE GOJ HAS PALCED PYONGYANG IN A "HIGH RISK" CATEGORY FOR PURPOSES OF GRANTING OFFICIAL LONG-TERM CREDIT INSURANCE, THEREBY IN EFFECT SUSPENDING NEW EXIM BANK LOANS. ALTHOUGH NORTH KOREA'S INTERNATIONAL INDEBTEDNESS DIFFICULTIES WOULD PROBABLY HAVE IMPELLED THE GOJ TO TAKE THIS MEASURE IN ANY EVENT, POLITICAL DIMENSION OF SUPPORT FOR ROK IS ALSO CLEARLY EVIDENT. THE JAPANESE ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN AS ACTIVE AS EVER IN SUPPORTING THE ROK POSITION IN THE UN, PARTICULARLY IF BOTH THE ROK AND THE US CONSULT CLOSELY WITH GOJ, AND WELL IN ADVANCE.

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10. FINALLY, AS VICE FOREIGN MINISTER TOGO PUT IT TO AN EMBOFF, "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING JAPAN CAN DO IS TO REASSURE THE UNITED STATES" ABOUT THE VALUE THE GOJ PLACES ON THE ALLIANCE. IN ADDITION, THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOJ ATTACHES TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE ROK, THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US TRBOPS IN THE ROK, AND THE STABILITY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA HAVE BEEN FEATURES OF ALL RECENT HIGH-LEVEL CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES. THESE POINTS WILL BE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE APPROACH THAT PRIME MINISTER MIKI WILL MAKE TO PRESIDENT FORD WHEN THEY MEET IN AUGUST.

11. IMPLICATIONS FOR US INTERESTS - THE GOJ ASSESSMENT
OF ITS INTERESTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA AS A RESULT OF US
WITHDRAWAL FROM INDOCHINA MAY RESULT IN A STRONGER US-JAPAN
SECURITY RELATIONSHIP. JDA CHIEF SAKATA, BACKED BY PRIME
MINISTER MIKI, HAS BEEN PRESSING STRONGLY OF LATE FOR JOINT
US-JAPAN DEFENSE CONSULTATIONS AND PLANNING, AND OTHER
CONSERVATIVES ARE INVOLVED IN THREADS OF A DEBATE THAT SEEMS
GENERALLY TURNED, IN PART, TOWARD MAKING JAPANESE SECURITY
POLICY MORE REALISTIC IN ITS APPLICATION TO REAL SECURITY
PROBLEMS NOW PERCEIVED MORE CLEARLY THAN BEFORE.
SAKATA'S IMMEDIATE INTEREST PROBABLY IS A MEETING WITH SECDEF
SCHLESINGER, AND WHETHER HIS DESIRE FOR JOINT PLANNING
SURVIVES THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE REMAINS TO BE
SEEN. THE MOOD OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, HOWEVER, MAY PROPEL
THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION TOWARD A CLEARER ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF KOREA AND OF THE ROLE OF THE US-JAPAN SECURITY
TREATY IN THAT CONTEXT. THE GOJ, AT LEAST, APPEARS MORE
FIRMLY CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR SECURITY
RELATIONSHIP, AND THIS TENDS TO MAKE DEFENSE OF OUR BASE
POSTURE IN JAPAN MORE CONFIDENT.

12. THE JAPANESE ASSESSMENT ALSO COINCIDES WITH US INTEREST
IN BETTER ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS. US EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN
TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE.
HODGSON

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